

According to the estimates of the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the growth rate (at 1999-2000 prices) of the agricultural sector during the first four years of the current Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) averages to 1.9 percent against targeted annual growth rate of 4 per cent.

(d) and (e) The Planning Commission has reviewed the situation in the Mid-term Appraisal released on June, 2005. It has observed that a consequence of fall in agricultural growth rate has been the stagnation of food consumption. A matter of concern is that the decline in cereals consumption is not being made up by increased consumption of other foods. To ensure food security in the country, the targeted public distribution system is in operation. The food for work programme and mid-day meals programme, the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) are some of the major efforts to sustain and strengthen the food security. The major steps taken to increase agricultural productivity and enhance agricultural growth include:

- * Increase in the rate of public investment in sectors like irrigation, watershed development in rainfed areas, rural road connectivity, rural electrification.
- * Revitalization of Agricultural extension system through Krishi Vikas Kendras in each district.
- * Agricultural diversification through horticulture and floriculture.
- * Development/strengthening of modern agricultural markets.
- * Reorientation of banks towards extending credit, especially production credit, to rural and farmers' households at concessional rate of interests.
- * Revitalization of Agricultural research to ensure full exploitation of scientific advances for improving productivity according to agro-climatic conditions.
- * Contract farming to attract corporate investors.

Reduction in duty on import of wheat

1034. SHRI AMAR SINGH:

SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have waived the five per cent duty on import of wheat by private traders to ease pressure on bulk consumers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the quantity of wheat which have been imported after the reduction on duty and to which extent the price of wheat has come down in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) *Vide* Notification No. 97/2006-Cus. Dated September 9, 2006 of Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, the *ad valorem* duty rates of wheat have been reduced to 'NIL' rate of duty from existing 5%.

(c) It is estimated that 6.6 lakh MT of wheat have been imported by private traders, besides 35 lakh MT (out of 55 lakh MT wheat contracted for import) by the State Trading Corporation of India (for the Central Pool) at Zero rate of duty. The price of wheat has not come down after the reduction in duty.

Production of foodgrains

1035. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to overcare of industrial development in the country, a large fertile land has been covered resulting in a heavy reduction of agricultural production;

(b) if so, the total production of foodgrains, rice, pulses, etc. during the current year, State-wise;

(c) whether this production is in a position to meet the need of the country; and

(d) if not, whether Government are importing wheat, if so, the quantity thereof and at what prices it shall be supplied to the common man?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) As per available Land Use Statistics, the total